

WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division Monthly Report

September 2005

This edition highlights the Public Transportation and Rail Division's progress and milestones reached in these areas:

- Division News
 - Transit Mobility
 - Public Transportation
 - Passenger Rail and Urban Rail
 - Commute Trip Reduction/Transportation Demand Management
 - Upcoming Events
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Division News

Changes in the division's organizational structure and responsibilities

The transportation demand management (TDM) activities that have previously been carried out in WSDOT's Urban Planning Office, including the I-405 TDM program, are being moved to the Office of Transit Mobility under Theresa Smith. This change enhances WSDOT's ability to respond to the 2005 Legislature's direction to guide the coordination of decentralized service and improve connectivity of public transportation programs. We are very pleased to welcome staff members Jean Mabry and Sarah Kavage to the Public Transportation and Rail Division.

The Office of Transit Mobility staff will manage TDM corridor projects including I-405, SR520, and the Alaskan Way Viaduct project, and in collaboration with the Commute Trip Reduction Program will develop policies and strategies for TDM statewide. The PT&R Division looks forward to further developing the TDM program and continuing to deliver effective services to the public.

WSDOT hosts successful public transportation conference

The annual Washington State Public Transportation Conference, held August 22–24 in SeaTac, attracted nearly 500 participants. The three-day conference mixed 52 workshops and 57 vendor exhibits with speakers and networking opportunities. Workshops explored system efficiencies that can be achieved using innovative services and technologies and highlighted the many statewide efforts being undertaken to integrate the various aspects of our transportation system.



The Recognition and Awards banquet continued as one of the conference's most popular traditions.

The conference kicked off Monday with an opening lunch featuring Senator Mary Margaret Haugen and nationally-known travel and commuting expert, Alan E. Pisarski. On Tuesday, the state's best transit and paratransit drivers and mechanics competed in the Washington State Public Transportation Rodeo. Tuesday evening, top public transportation employees and rodeo winners were honored at a banquet. After Wednesday's workshops, transportation associations gave out awards—including two awards to Rep. Ed Murray—and Secretary MacDonald introduced the closing keynote presentation by Bob Drewel, Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council.

Information about the 2005 conference is online at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/conference

Transit Mobility

Regional Mobility Grant Program

The WSDOT Office of Transit Mobility (OTM) Advisory Committee and Grant Technical Work Group are working hard to create the Regional Mobility Grant Program. In the last six weeks, the two groups met six times to frame the initial grant criteria, prioritization approach, and the call for projects. The two groups will meet jointly on September 2 to finalize the call for projects, which will begin on September 9.

Project applications will require an essay response to grant questions as well as electronic submission to the OTM. Project proposals must be submitted to the OTM by November 1. To assist prospective applicants in preparing their proposals, two grant-writing workshops will be held on September 20 and October 11.

For more information on the Office of Transit Mobility and the Regional Mobility Grant Program, please visit: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/otm/default.cfm>

Public Transportation

WSDOT Grants Team will resume site visits during September

WSDOT staff have scheduled eleven site visits to grantees during September. They will visit Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Olympic Community Action Council, Jefferson Transit, Olympic Bus Lines, Clallam Transit, Makah Tribe, Northwestern Stage Lines, Special Mobility Services, Rural Resources, Senior Services of Seattle/King County and Pierce County Community Action.

The purpose of the site visits is to:

- Provide technical assistance in meeting state and federal grant requirements
- Review financial records and procedures, and other operating and administrative information.
- Review required written policies
- Verify and provide assistance toward agency compliance with federal funding regulations
- Review preventative maintenance records and inspect vehicles and equipment purchased with FTA funds

WSDOT staff will complete site visits to 24 other grantees before the end of 2005. For more information, contact Patty Alvord at alvordp@wsdot.wa.gov or (360) 705-7979.

WSDOT released *Summary of Public Transportation – 2004*

At the end of August, WSDOT released the annual *Summary of Public Transportation Systems for 2004*. The 250-page report provides a statewide overview of transit service for the years 2002 through 2004, and planned services and operations for 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2010. The report describes the services, achievements, and objectives for 26 governmental transit operators in the state. WSDOT compiles annual operational and financial data from each transit operator and provides copies of the report to the state legislature and other interested parties. We are pleased to report that publication of this year's summary is the earliest printing of the report in many years.



Findings from this year's report include:

- For the second year in a row, overall statewide ridership increased. In 2004 transit delivered over 170 million passenger trips in our state—a 4.82 percent increase over 2003.
- Operating expenses for public transportation increased in 2004 by 6.02 percent statewide over 2003 for fixed route, route deviated, demand response, and vanpool services.
- Across the state, local tax revenues increased 6.19 percent compared to 2003 figures. In 2004, voters approved four of five taxing propositions to establish or increase local sales tax rates for public transportation, including the following:
 - Asotin County residents approved a 0.2 percent local sales and use tax, creating Washington's 27th transit system.
 - Residents in Spokane Transit's and Everett Transit's service areas approved 0.3 percent sales and use tax increases.
 - Lewis County residents approved an increase of 0.1 percent to double local funding for Twin Transit's public transportation services.
 - Clark County voters rejected a measure that would have increased C-TRAN's 0.3 percent sales and use tax to 0.6 percent.

The summary is available at:

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/library/2004_summary/2004_summary.cfm

Rural transportation open houses held in Clallam and Jefferson counties

On August 2, WSDOT held two open houses in Jefferson and Clallam counties to raise awareness about transportation services and the department's ongoing projects to coordinate intercity transportation services and provide on-line route and schedule information. The open houses followed the loss of Pennco Transportation. Thirty-eight people attended an open house in Sequim while a Port Hadlock meeting drew twenty people.

Residents also heard from the area's transportation providers who were on hand to answer questions and provide trip-planning assistance: Clallam and Jefferson transit systems, Paratransit Services, Olympic Bus Lines, and others. Residents had the opportunity to express their interests to service providers and WSDOT.

Since the open houses, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission has received an application for an operating permit to transport passengers from Clallam and Jefferson counties to hospitals and multi-modal centers in King and Pierce County.

For more information, contact Dan Wayne at wayned@wsdot.wa.gov or (360) 705-7909.

Passenger Rail and Urban Rail

FTA auditors give WSDOT high marks

A recent performance audit of WSDOT's rail fixed guideway state safety oversight (SSO) program by the Federal Transit Administration ranked WSDOT #1 among all states in the program. The audit examined WSDOT's implementation of the Federal Transit Administration's SSO program. The audit also reviewed local agencies' performance of their safety and security activities. Those agencies include King County/Metro Transit's Waterfront Streetcar, Seattle Center Monorail, and Sound Transit's Tacoma Link.

"It is a pleasure to report that WSDOT has an exemplary program," noted Jim Caton in his letter accompanying the final report to Judy Giniger. In addition, Federal Transit Administration staff commended SSO program manager Jeff Schultz's management and implementation of the Department's program. During the next several months, the SSO program will be changing to comply with new rules issued by the Federal Transit Administration.

Safety oversight of light rail to move to Urban Rail Program

Safety oversight for light rail will soon be moving from the Rail Office in Olympia to the Urban Rail Program in Seattle. Jeff Schultz, the current State Safety Oversight Official for fixed guideway rail systems in Washington, will hand off responsibility to Kenneth Loen in the near future.

Loen is also the Transit Agreements Manager for the Urban Rail Program, establishing, negotiating, and managing agreements with Sound Transit and other local agencies. These agreements cover design and construction management services performed by WSDOT and our consultants. He also manages the monthly invoicing for WSDOT services performed for Sound Transit.

Commute Trip Reduction/Transportation Demand Management

CTR Task Force approves changes for Trip Reduction Performance Program

At the August 26 meeting of the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Task Force approved changes to the Trip Reduction Performance Program (TRPP). Contingent on October 3–4 approval of revisions to the Washington Administrative Code¹, the program will move forward with a new call for proposals.

TRPP projects will differ from the 2003–2005 grants awarded under the CTR Performance Grants Program. The recent approved changes are based on extensive work by a committee made up of CTR Task Force members, previous grant recipients, representatives from private organizations, and WSDOT staff. The modified program will allow for longer project timelines and more flexible measurement procedures.

Draft schedule for the Trip Reduction Performance Program:

- October 3–4 Scheduled approval for changes to administrative rules
- October 6 Call for projects
- October 24–28 Training sessions will be conducted
- November 18 Applications are due
- January 4 Grant awards announced

For more information about TRPP, see www.wsdot.wa.gov/tm/taskforce/tfmaterials.cfm or contact Robin Hartsell at hartsr@wsdot.wa.gov or (360) 705-7508.

Upcoming Events

Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation meeting

October 7, December 2

9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

To confirm times and locations, visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/acct/acct_meetings.htm

OTM Advisory Committee meetings

September 2, October 14, November 4, November 18, November 30

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

WSDOT Urban Corridors Office, 401 2nd Avenue South, Suite 300

Seattle, Washington

For more information, contact Theresa Smith at smithtl@wsdot.wa.gov or (206) 464-1282.

¹ 468-60 WAC

OTM Grant Technical Work Group meetings

September 2, October 11, November 8, November 15

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

WSDOT Urban Corridors Office, 401 2nd Avenue South, Suite 300

Seattle, Washington

For more information, contact Theresa Smith at smithtl@wsdot.wa.gov or (206) 464-1282.

CTR Task Force meeting

September 23

11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. To confirm times and locations, contact Shelley Pedro at

pedros@wsdot.wa.gov or (360) 705-7846.

The WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division prepares this monthly newsletter as a service to those interested in the activities of the division and its partners within the agency. To receive your own copy via e-mail or for questions regarding newsletter articles, please contact Tonia Buell, communications manager, at buellt@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-7439.